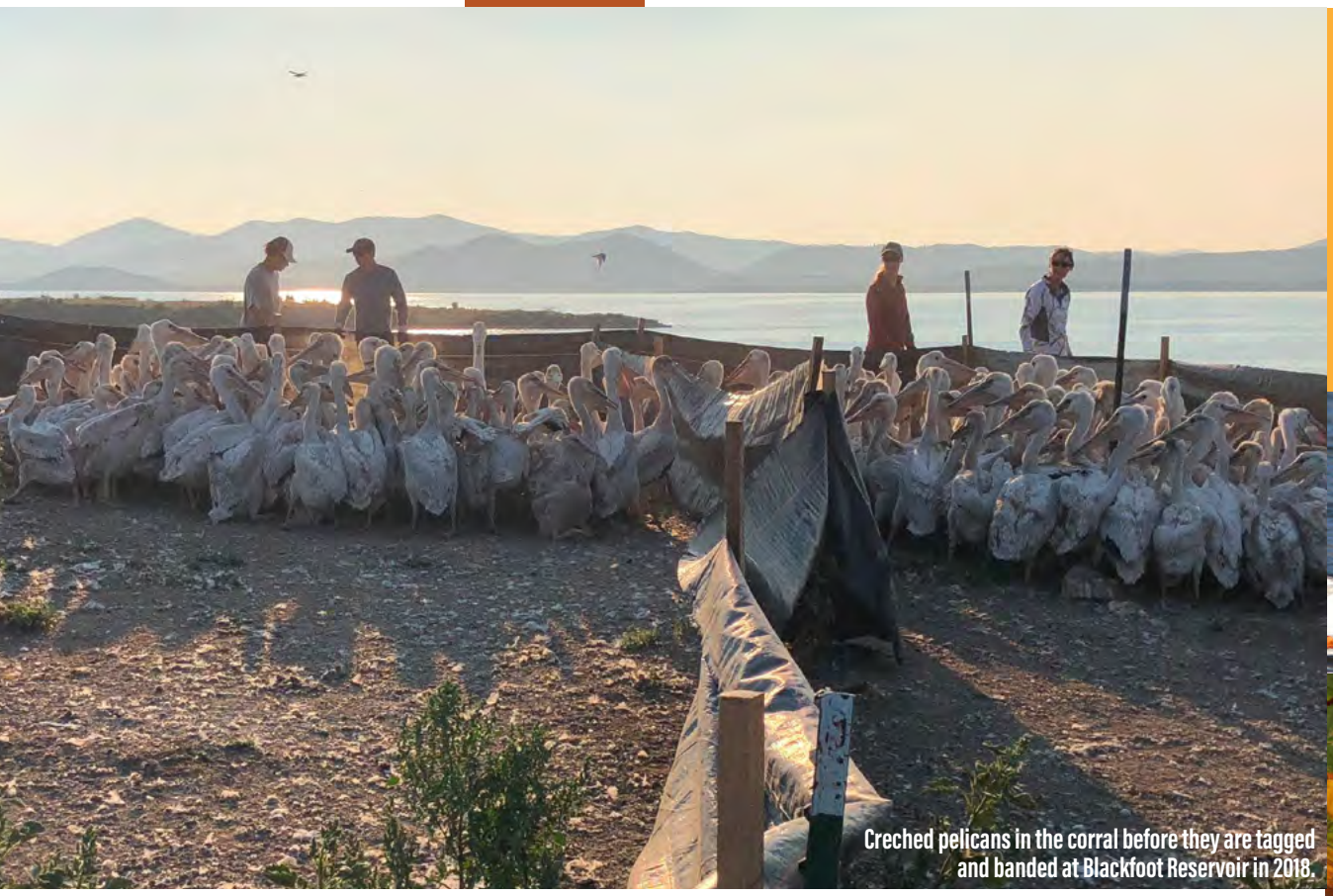
Idaho Watchable Wildlife

FALL 2018

Windows to Wildlife

Your support at work in Idaho's landscapes



Creched pelicans in the corral before they are tagged and banded at Blackfoot Reservoir in 2018.

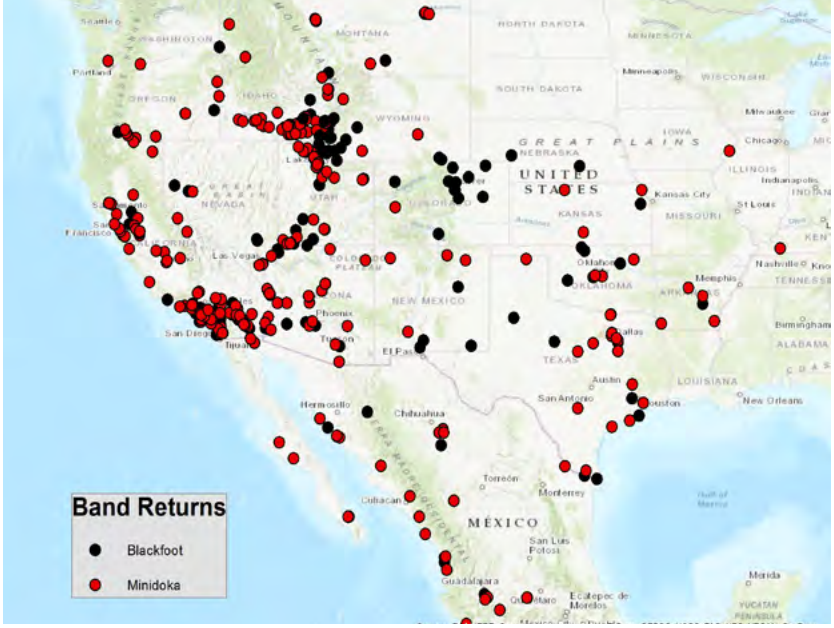
IN THIS ISSUE

Keeping Tabs on Idaho's American White Pelican

by Becky Abel*, Regional Wildlife Diversity Biologist, Southeast Region, Idaho Department of Fish and Game

The American White Pelican is a distinctive and recognizable native bird in Idaho. Anyone who spends time on or near Idaho waters has probably encountered them. In spite of their commonness in many places, biologists still struggle to understand their habits and interactions between breeding colonies and foraging sites. To address this lack of knowledge, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) began a multi-year effort in 2007 to monitor pelicans in Idaho by marking pre-fledgling birds from breeding colonies at Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge and Blackfoot Reservoir with bands and wing tags that are either red (Minidoka) or black (Blackfoot). The objectives of this project are to improve our understanding of migratory movements, local movements and habitat use, survivorship, and fidelity to breeding colonies and southeast Idaho in general and will be useful in developing management strategies for pelicans, fisheries, and habitats associated with Idaho's nesting colonies.

Early one early morning every July, biologists and volunteers round up young pelicans on their natal colony. Young pelicans cannot yet fly and tend to form large groups called crèches. This behavior enables us to herd the group into a corral where we can easily catch individuals. We fit each pelican with a metal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leg band and 2 cattle ear tags, with unique 3-digit alpha numeric codes that we attach to the patagium of each wing. After we release the marked pelicans, the readily visible tags on their wings will identify where and when they were banded. This project has continued over the last eleven years and we have marked nearly 5,000 pelicans. Thus far, we have received approximately 1,000 observations of our marked pelicans ranging from as far north as northern Montana and south to the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico and as far west as San Francisco and east to Kentucky. This project is expected to continue for years to come. If you see a pelican with wing tags, please write down the location of the bird, and the number and color of the tag and report it to the U.S. Geological Survey's Bird Banding Lab at www.reportband.gov.



Locations of reported observations of tagged pelicans from the Minidoka colony (red) and the Blackfoot colony (black), updated September 2018.

To further refine the information we have about pelicans in Idaho, IDFG implemented another pelican marking project in 2018. We attached solar-powered GPS backpacks to 25 adult pelicans from the Blackfoot River and Blackfoot Reservoir. Our objectives are to determine breeding status and nesting location of pelicans that forage on native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in the Blackfoot River system, and assess use of regional waters by pelicans that forage in the Blackfoot River system.

Capturing adult pelicans proved to be quite a challenge! We used a variety of methods to attempt to capture adult pelicans, including setting 100 modified leg-hold traps, a rocket net, and using net guns. However, the pelicans proved too observant, wary, and intelligent to be caught. After an exhausting month of unsuccessful attempts, we finally found a method that worked that involved boats, salmon nets, and pelicans that had just finished eating and were too heavy to quickly take flight before we scooped them up into our boat. Once a pelican was captured, we fit the bird with a metal leg band and then we used specialized ribbon to tailor a customized backpack that holds the GPS transmitter in place. We recorded weight and other measurements, including bill length, which allows us to determine sex of the pelican. Based on our measurements, at least 24 of 25 pelicans we captured were male. Before releasing each pelican, we dyed their wings bright pink with a temporary dye so we could easily spot them and monitor their behavior after release.

The GPS transmitters record and save locations of the marked birds every 15 minutes, and the location data are transmitted remotely to our database so we can monitor their locations, movements, and behavior from the comfort of our computers and smartphones. The transmitters will record data for the next 3 to 4 years, allowing us to see changes that occur over time.

Pelicans are now beginning their migration south for the winter! Pelican V recently flew down to the Salton Sea in California, and Pelican X has made it to northern Oklahoma. It will be an interesting few years spying on these fascinating birds as they fly, forage, and raise young in Idaho and beyond.

You'll be able to monitor the marked pelicans, too! Soon we will have a web-based pelican tracking map on the IDFG website where you can view live locations of each marked bird.

Left: Adult pelican being fitted with a transmitter backpack. **Right:** Pelican released with GPS transmitter backpack and pink-dyed wings. (Photos by Becky Abel, IDFG)

Ecology of American White Pelican

by Martha Wackenhut*, Colleen Moulton*, and Becky Abel*, Idaho Department of Fish & Game

There are two distinct pelican populations in North America; one east of the Continental Divide and the other west of the Divide. There are 19-21 breeding colonies in the western population, with an estimated population of about 46,000 breeding pairs. Idaho supports approximately 11% of the western breeding population at three nesting colonies. In 2018, the pelican colony on Blackfoot Reservoir was estimated at 1,416 breeding birds. The colony at Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge was estimated at 3,676 breeding birds. The breeding colony at Island Park did not successfully establish in 2018.

Pelicans nest in large colonies, usually on islands or peninsulas in lakes, reservoirs, or large rivers. This strategy provides protection from disturbance and predation. However, this also makes them particularly susceptible to dramatic population fluctuations. These fluctuations can be caused by disease die-offs (such as botulism and West Nile virus), human destruction and disturbance, chemical contamination, flooding of nesting areas and drying of wetlands important for foraging. Because pelicans concentrate in large numbers in only a few suitable places, these events have the potential to impact large numbers of birds.

Upon their return each spring to breeding colonies (late April – May in Idaho), pelicans establish breeding pairs and both adults set about attending the nest and young. Although they lay 2 eggs, usually only one chick survives to fledging, and of these less than 50% survive to two years of age. Pelicans usually breed annually starting at around 3 years old. Pelicans are relatively long lived birds, over 10 years, and there are records of birds living well into their 20s.

Pelicans are one of the largest North American birds with a wing span of 9 feet and weighing up to 15 pounds. To support this large body size they may consume 3 pounds of food a day. In Idaho, pelicans predominantly forage on abundant populations of nongame fish resulting in non-consequential or acceptable impacts to other resource values and users. However, pelican predation in some areas measurably impacts sport fishing and native trout conservation programs, creating conflict between pelican and fisheries management objectives. Pelicans may travel 70–100 miles from their breeding colonies to take advantage of good foraging opportunities. So some pelicans foraging in Idaho may in fact be from colonies located in other states and some "Idaho" pelicans may forage outside of Idaho.

Idaho's pelicans are migratory, wintering in southern latitudes such as southern California, Mexico, and the gulf coast states. Migratory birds present particular conservation and management challenges because their populations can be impacted not only at their breeding sites, but also during migration and at wintering areas. Often these locations have very different environmental pressures, conservation priorities and capabilities, and oversight from different management agencies. Pelicans breeding in Idaho are part of a larger population which may experience impacts outside of our state and influence. Conversely, Idaho's management of pelicans and their habitat may impact populations elsewhere.

Conservation Corner

Leave the Leaves

by Justin Wheeler*, Web Manager and Communications Administrator, The Xerces Society
Originally published on www.xerces.org

Besides providing the right plants, and protecting your garden from pesticides, one of the next most valuable things you can do to support pollinators and other invertebrates is to provide them with the winter cover they need in the form of fall leaves and standing dead plant material. Frequently however, this is the hardest pill for gardeners to swallow.

It may be habitual, a matter of social conditioning, or a holdover of outdated gardening practices from yesteryear – but for whatever reason, we just can't seem to help ourselves from wanting to tidy up the garden at the end of the season – raking, mowing, and blowing away a bit of nature that is essential to the survival of moths, butterflies, snails, spiders, and dozens of arthropods.

That's why this year – and every year – we are making the case for leaving the leaves and offering input on what to do with them. Read on!

Must Love Leaves

While monarch migration is a well-known phenomenon, it's not the norm when it comes to butterflies. In fact, the vast majority of butterflies and moths overwinter in the landscape as an egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, or adult. In all but the warmest climates, these butterflies use leaf litter for winter cover. Great spangled fritillary and wooly bear caterpillars tuck themselves into a pile of leaves for protection from cold weather and predators. Red-banded hairstreaks lay their eggs on fallen oak leaves, which become the first food of the caterpillars when they emerge. Luna moths and swallowtail butterflies disguise their cocoons and chrysalis as dried leaves, blending in with the "real" leaves. There are many such examples.

Beyond butterflies, bumble bees also rely on leaf litter for protection. At the end of summer, mated queen bumble bees burrow only an inch or two into the earth to hibernate for winter. An extra thick layer of leaves is welcome protection from the elements. There are so many animals that live in leaves: spiders, snails, worms, beetles, millipedes, mites, and more – that support the chipmunks, turtles, birds, and amphibians that rely on these insects for food.

It's easy to see how important leaves really are to sustaining the natural web of life.

Leaves and Lawn

According to a 2005 NASA estimate, there are around 40 million acres of lawn in the continental United States – making turf grass the single largest "crop" we grow. This disproportionate ratio of lawn to garden is the main reason we rake, mow, and blow. To mimic the natural ecosystem an animal needs, a layer of leaves needs to be at least a couple of inches thick. While this would be too much of a good thing for turf grass to handle – research has shown that lawns actually benefit from a thin layer of leaves, and the rest can be piled up around ornamental trees, shrubs, and perennials to no ill effect.

If you must keep your lawn clear of leaves – try opting for raking or using a leaf vacuum to capture whole leaves, rather than shredding them with a mower and make a leaf pile in a corner of your yard. More on that below.

Better still would be to reduce your overall lawn footprint, replacing it instead with wildlife supporting plantings that can be future repositories for fall leaves.

To shred or not to shred

Many organic gardeners opt for shredding their fall leaves for use in compost piles. While this is certainly a more environmentally friendly practice than bagging leaves and sending them to the landfill – shredded leaves will not provide the same cover as leaving them whole, and you may be destroying eggs, caterpillars, and chrysalis along with the leaves. We suggest that leaves in garden beds and lawn edges be left whole. Where space allows, consider creating a leaf pile and allowing it to break down naturally, or add the leaves gradually to your compost pile over time. Such efforts will keep critters safe and allow you to benefit from the rich garden gift that falls from the trees above.

Free mulch!

Another reason to leave the leaves is for the many benefits they provide to your landscape. Leaves provide valuable organic matter and build up healthy soil. Fallen leaves have the same weed suppression and moisture retention properties of shredded wood mulch – and they're free! Where mulch is desired as a decorative element, what could be more seasonally appropriate than a pile of brightly colored fall leaves?

In the past gardeners may have worried that fall leaves, matted down by snow or rain, would have a negative impact on their perennials. In reality, a thick layer of leaves provides additional insulation against bitter cold weather, and can protect newly planted perennials when frost-heave may expose tender roots. Anyone who has spotted fragile spring ephemerals popping up in the woods knows that all but the frailest of plants will burst through the leaf litter in spring without trouble.

The bottom line

You gave them flowers and a place to nest. You tended your garden and avoided pesticides. Don't carry all of that hard work out to the curb. Simply put, when we treat leaves like trash – we're tossing out the beautiful moths and butterflies that we'll surely miss and work so very hard to attract.

While the idea is to "leave the leaves" permanently – for all of the benefits mentioned above – if you do decide you need to cleanup the garden and remove the leaves in spring, make sure you wait until late in the season so as not to destroy all the life you've worked to protect.

LEAVES ARE NOT LITTER

THEY 'RE FOOD AND SHELTER FOR
BUTTERFLIES, BEETLES, BEES, MOTHS, AND MORE.
TELL FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS TO JUST

#LEAVETHELEAVES

xerces.org

News from the Field

Importance of Road Ecology in Idaho, Revealed

by Hiliary Turner*, Wildlife Technician,
Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Since December of 2017, I have worked for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) as a roadside carcass surveyor in the Upper Snake Region (Region 6). I drive US-20 from Idaho Falls to the Montana border every other day, searching for carcasses and collecting data when I find them. "Why?" you may ask yourself. Road ecology is an emerging science within the broader discipline of ecology. Ecology is the study of interactions and relationships between organisms and their environments. Road ecology is simply the practice in which scientists study the ecological effects of roads. Again, why? From two-tracks to interstates, most humans use some kind of road in their daily activities. The US alone contains 4.12 million miles of road (2.68 million paved miles) and the ecological effects (direct and indirect) of this transportation system are vast.

The ecological effects of roads have been studied in Idaho since at least the late 1960s, when IDFG documented the effects of the completion and opening of I-84 in southern Idaho on the migratory Sublett mule deer herd. I-84 was opened on November 1, 1969 and in the next six weeks, 18 mule deer were killed by vehicles. For a herd that historically migrated from summer range in the Sublett Mountains southwesterly to winter range in the Black Pine Mountains, I-84 became an impediment to migration. Some animals were unable or unwilling to cross the large road and many were killed as they attempted to cross it. The interstate altered the migration route and many deer remained on the East side of the road, wintering near Snowville, Utah. The new winter range had insufficient forage for the deer and during the following winters an estimated 40% of the herd died of malnutrition. In an attempt to pass cattle safely across the road, as well as restore this important migration route, crossing structures in the form of underpass culverts were eventually installed. Without wildlife-proof fencing to help deer reach the structures, the attempt was ineffective at restoring the migration route. Improvements have been made to the culverts since then and some deer do now cross under the road successfully. Some biologists estimate that the herd is currently less than half of what it was in the 1960s due to the road, which still acts as an impediment to migration.

The story of the Sublett mule deer herd demonstrates both the direct and indirect effects of roads on wildlife. Over the last four decades, hundreds of deer have been killed directly by vehicles on I-84 but mule deer are also indirectly affected by the road because their migration route was changed, resulting in a lower population.

Often, the indirect effects of roads on wildlife can be as or more severe than the direct mortality itself. Habitat is lost and fragmented when roads are built. Animals have a harder time accessing resources and moving throughout their home ranges. Migrations are lost or changed due to the barrier effect of roads. To further complicate things, ungulate (hoofed mammal) migrations depend on learned and socially transmitted information and if lost, can take decades to restore. Noise, light, and chemicals pollute roadside habitat for up to several hundred feet beyond the side of the road. Disturbed roadsides

All that remains is a head; a great horned owl was decapitated during a wildlife vehicle collision on US-20 in SE Idaho.

Left: Variable message sign (VMS) at the top of Targhee Pass, SE Idaho. VMS can be effective forms of WVC mitigation, if use sparingly and strategically. Even the most strategic VMS do not touch the effectiveness of crossing structures with fencing for mitigating WVCs. **Center:** Wildlife underpass on Hwy 21 near the Boise River Wildlife Management Area just outside of Boise. **Right:** White-tailed deer killed on US-20 in SE Idaho. (Photos by Hilary Turner, IDFG).

provide ideal habitat for invasive plant and animal species. Litter, intended or not, finds its way into ecosystems throughout the year via roads. Humans often think of the large animals that are directly killed on roads because we can see the evidence that deer and elk are hit; even skunks, raccoons, and owls are commonly observed. But the direct effects of roads are much farther reaching than what typically meets the human eye. Billions of insects, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals are killed annually on roads in the US. Some studies estimate that up to one million animals are killed each day on roads in the US. Using the work I have done in Idaho as an example, since December 2017, I have documented over 700 unique dead organisms on a 63-mile stretch of US-20 in SE Idaho. Because carcasses do not persist long on roadways, I may be missing up to 14 times the number of small animals that I do find.

You may be feeling pretty negative about roads after reading all of this, but not all is lost! IDFG has a memorandum of understanding with Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and the agencies work together toward solutions for some of the ecological problems associated with Idaho's roads. Because wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVCs) are also safety risks for drivers like you and me, ITD has an interest in these kinds of projects and a responsibility to implement them, when feasible. It is through this agency collaboration that my carcass survey is possible. Carcass surveys provide valuable information about mortality hotspots. This information can be used by agencies to determine appropriate WVC mitigation type and siting. ITD and IFDG have already collaborated on a couple mitigation projects, including the wildlife underpass and fencing that has been installed on US-21 near the Boise River Wildlife Management Area. Trail cameras have documented wildlife using the underpass. A wildlife overpass with fencing is planned for the near future on US-21 to address wildlife-vehicle collisions and habitat connectivity issues. Other projects consist of wildlife underpasses and fencing in the Coeur d'Alene region, barn owl collision mitigation in the Pocatello region, and wildlife underpasses and fencing in Upper Snake area.

Remember, as a driver, you can also do your part to make a difference for animals! Fall and spring are the peak seasons for deer and elk movement. During fall, ungulates are migrating from summer to winter range and beginning their mating season, also called the rut. Add daylight savings time (a one hour shift in predictable traffic patterns) into the mix and fall is usually the worst time of year for WVCs. If you see one animal cross the road, it is likely that others are near. Animals are more active at dawn and dusk. Keep yourself and others safe by driving defensively, avoiding nighttime driving when possible, and watching for animals near the road.

Fall Wildlife Events

Boise WaterShed

11818 West Joplin Rd., Boise; (208) 489-1284
www.boiseenvironmentaleducation.org

VISIT THE BOISE WATERSHED

Let the Boise WaterShed Environmental Education Center introduce you to your watershed through interactive exhibits and public art. Individuals and families may drop in to explore the free exhibit hall and River Campus during business hours without reservation. Groups of 10 or more people should call (208) 608-7300 at least two weeks in advance to schedule a free tour. Tours and lessons are designed to engage groups in hands-on activities, demonstrations, science experiments, and outdoor education. Outreach programs for the cities of Boise, Garden City, Meridian and Eagle are also offered at no charge.

WATERSHED WEEKEND PROGRAMS

Join us at the Boise WaterShed every third Saturday of each month for nature and art activities the whole family can enjoy! Activities take place from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. A one-hour outdoor tour of the water renewal facility is offered from 11:30-12:30, weather-permitting.The tour is not recommended for children under the age of four; closed-toe shoes required. FREE admission! No pre-registration required.

OCTOBER 20 - Fall Festival!

Come celebrate the beautiful fall colors in the City of Trees at the Boise WaterShed! Create festive Fall-themed arts and crafts, like Pumpkin painting, explore the exhibit hall and take a silly harvest photo! Meet some live reptiles in the theater with Reptile Adventures! Finally, take a fun hay ride tour on the outskirts of the water renewal facility to learn what happens when you flush at 10:15, 11:00, 11:45 and 12:30! Tours limited to first 25 people, weather-permitting.

NOVEMBER 17 - Map Mania!

Navigate your way to the Boise WaterShed from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm for a day of mapping to celebrate GIS Day! This year's event theme will be "Things Kids Love and Where They're From"! Whether you love Animals, Toys, Music or Food, you can discover where they come from! Create your own "Where the Wild Things Are" maps, then voyage over to make world cookie maps, and take a "Music from Around the World" quiz for cool prizes. New exciting activities this year! At 11:30 take a water renewal facility tour. Brought to you by the Southwest Idaho GIS Users Group.

DECEMBER 15 - Handmade Holiday!

Jingle all the way to the Dick Eardley Boise Senior Center (690 Robbins Road) and spend some time crafting handmade gifts and ornaments for the holidays! Make a wreath, beautiful ornaments and decorations from recycled or reusable household items. Take a free photo with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Enjoy holiday carols provided by a local choir group as well as tasty treats for all! Join the Boise Environmental Education partners to ring in the Holiday Season! Note: Boise WaterShed closed today.

Foothills Learning Center

3188 Sunset Peak Rd., Boise; (208) 514-3755
www.boiseenvironmentaleducation.org

FOOTHILLS FAMILY DAYS

2nd Saturdays 10am to 1pm. No pre-registration, Please - no pets.

OCTOBER 13 – Creepy Crawly Creatures! Spiders, Earwigs, and Beetles, Oh My!

Join us as we explore some scary specimens. From pollination to pest control, come learn about why we need these eerie insects. While you are here, make some creepy crawly crafts & dress up like your favorite beastly bug!

NOVEMBER 10 –Idaho's Land Before Time!

Learn about Rocks, Soil, Erosion, and what Idaho looked like before people were here. We'll have dirt painting, Rock displays, water erosion demos, and a guided hike to Red Cliffs!

SUNSET LECTURE SERIES- FREE MONTHLY EVENING ADULT EDUCATION SERIES

Second Wednesday of the Month 7:00-8:30pm.

OCTOBER 10 – Feed the Bees! Create a Pollinator Garden.

Insect habitat worldwide is declining, but you can help! This talk will focus on three easy steps anyone can take to create pollinator habitat in your own backyard. Studies show that people in urban environments can affect insect diversity and abundance through gardening. Bee the change!

NOVEMBER 7 – **Birding Ghana: The Spectacular and the Difficult.** Ghana is a small country in western Africa that is visited by few tourists, except for birders. It doesn't have all the large mammals that more famous countries have. It does have hundreds of bird species that can only be found in that part of the continent, and it has better infrastructure than some of its neighbors. Ghana has its share of spectacular birds, such as the Violet Turaco and Standard-winged Nightjar. As usual, Terry Rich will cover not only the birds, but the fascinating landscapes and people of Ghana.

DECEMBER 12 - Our December talk is still a mystery, but check our Facebook page as the date gets closer we'll have it listed there.

BOISE BIRDING SERIES

First Wednesday of the Month, 9:00-10:00am. Our free birding program is great for experienced and novice birders alike. Terry Rich, our local ornithologist, provides information and tips on birds in the Boise area and beyond! Come to one or all sessions! Bird books and binoculars are available to borrow. No registration necessary.

OCTOBER 3 - Winter Ranges and Bird Conservation
Where do our local species go as winter approaches? Discover winter ranges for Idaho species. Some birds are local migrants and others are long distance migrants. Learn about conservation issues and opportunities in Mexico, Central and South America.

NOVEMBER 7 - Supporting Wintering Backyard Birds
Interested in strategies as to how to support winter resident birds? Join us for this session where you will get recommendations about the best bird seed and feeder choices for the birds in your backyard. Having difficulty figuring out who is who at the feeder? Terry will provide helpful identification tips.

DECEMBER 5 - Bird Counts in Idaho
So how are bird populations doing? This session will provide information about bird population monitoring and population trends. Who collects data? How is data collected? Where is it kept? What does it tell us? How can you contribute? You'll learn about ways to participate in data collection events like the Christmas Bird Count, Big Backyard Bird Count, Breeding Bird Survey and eBird.

Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge

287 West Side Rd., Bonners Ferry; (208) 267-3888
www.fws.gov/refuge/kootenai

JULY 15 - Pacific Northwest Bumble Bee Atlas Training
10am-3pm; Learn about bumble bees, their conservation status, and how to participate in the Pacific Northwest Bumble Bee Atlas during this full-day training. Please join this project and help collect critical information on Pacific Northwest bumble bees. With your help, we can create an army of trained volunteers equipped with cameras and vials, and collect bumble bee data throughout our region. Your participation will allow us to quickly and efficiently cover all three states, collect scientific quality data, and contribute to the local, regional, and global understanding of bumble bee distributions. Space is limited; click here to register.

MK Nature Center

600 Walnut Street, Boise; (208) 334-2225
idfg.idaho.gov/site/mk-nature-center

OCTOBER 20 - HOO Lives in Idaho
1pm-3pm; Come learn about the 14 species of owl that live or migrate through Idaho! Find out how owls are different from other birds, and how each species is unique. Listen to their interesting sounds, and learn how they live and hunt at night. Dissect owl pellets to find out what the owls have been eating. This program is appropriate for families with kids prek-7th grade. Program limit is 50 people (first come, first served). $2.50/person. Cash, checks and debit accepted. 1-3 pm. Questions? email Tess at tess.wolfenson@idfg.idaho.gov. Meet in the lobby of the Nature Center.

NOVEMBER 17 - Turkeys
1pm-3pm; Come learn about wild Turkeys! Just in time for Thanksgiving, find out how turkeys live, what they do and the sounds they make. Make a turkey craft to take home for Thanksgiving. This program is appropriate for families with kids prek-7th grade. Program limit is 50 people (first come, first served). $2.50/person. Cash, checks, and debit accepted. 1-3 pm. Questions? email Tess at tess.wolfenson@idfg.idaho.gov. Meet in the lobby of the Nature Center.

NOVEMBER 30 and DECEMBER 1 - Bird Seed Fundraiser, Program, and Holiday Shopping
9am-5pm; Our annual Bird Seed Sale fundraiser will be back! Come buy some nature-themed gifts for those who love wildlife; buy some birdseed to feed your backyard birds; and participate in family activities and crafts. Birdseed and gifts for sale Friday and Saturday from 9 am- 5 pm. Family activities and programs are offered only on Saturday from 11 am -2 pm. Bird presentations will be on Saturday at 11:30am, 12:30 pm, and 1:30 pm.Questions? Contact Sue Dudley at sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov.

Bird IDAHO

Your statewide birding adventure awaits

The Idaho Birding Trail is your guide to the best birding and wildlife viewing in Idaho!

IDAHO BIRDING TRAIL

IDAHO FISH & GAME

idahobirdingtrail.com

Spotlight Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Lewis's Woodpecker

Reprinted from the *Idaho State WIldlife Action Plan*

Lewis's woodpecker is a locally common but patchily distributed woodpecker of open ponderosa pine forest, open riparian woodland dominated by cottonwood, and logged or burned pine forest. Breeding populations occur throughout Idaho except in the southeastern portion of the state. Lewis's woodpecker is among the most unique of North American woodpeckers in the development of flycatching behavior, nest preference for well-decayed snags or old nest holes of primary excavators, and its striking plumage of glossy greenish-black, silver-white, and salmon-red described as "a curious mix" by famed explorer and namesake Meriwether Lewis. Suitable nesting habitat includes an open canopy (30% tree canopy closure), availability of nest cavities and perches, dead and downed woody debris, a brushy understory offering ground cover, and abundant insect prey. Outside of the breeding season, Lewis's Woodpecker is nomadic, following locally abundant food resources including fruit and nuts. Partly due to this nomadic nature, population size for this species is difficult to determine.

Lewis's woodpecker is a State of the Birds 2014 Yellow Watch List species due to declining population trends and predicted severe deterioration in the future suitability of breeding conditions. Primary conservation actions and management considerations to benefit this Idaho species include retention of cottonwood riparian forests and snag components, maintenance of natural stream flow patterns that promote natural recruitment of cottonwood seedlings, proper livestock grazing management to maintain understory shrub communities, and introduction of fire in lower montane conifers to restore open forest structure and create burned forest habitat.

Photo: Mike Thompson, CC-BY-SA 2.0 on Flickr CC

FRI. NOVEMBER 30TH & SAT., DECEMBER 1ST 2018, 9AM – 5PM

MK NATURE CENTER

HOLIDAY

BIRD SEED SALE

600 S. Walnut Street · Boise, Idaho 83712

Wild Birds Unlimited of Boise has been our faithful partner and supporter from the beginning. They continue to supply high quality seed for what is one of our most successful and popular fundraisers.

Wild Birds Unlimited will be donating 15% of their feeder & suet sales during the event back to MK nature Center!

Several varieties of seed will be available to feed your favorite birds. WBU will have the latest in bird feeding supplies available.

Saturday Dec. 1st Activities for the whole family

Live Bird Presentations -11:30, 12:30, & 1:30pm

Free take home kids' crafts -11 to 2pm

All Proceeds Support MK Nature Center's Educational Programs!

Contact Sue Dudley with questions: sue.dudley@idfg.idaho.gov or 208.287.2900

Thank You for Your Support!

Thank you to those who made direct donations, purchased or renewed a wildlife license plate, or let us know of a tax check-off donation between July 1 - September 30, 2018.

Your contribution provides important funding for wildlife and habitat conservation in Idaho.

Idaho Watchable Wildlife

Windows to Wildlife

Wildlife Diversity Program
PO Box 25
Boise, ID 83707-0025

Forwarding Service Requested

Windows to Wildlife is a quarterly publication of the Idaho Watchable Wildlife Committee and IDFG Wildlife Diversity Program.

Deniz Aygen — Editor

deniz.aygen@idfg.idaho.gov
208•287•2750

To submit an article, obtain a subscription, or notify us of address change, contact the Editor at the above address.

The Idaho Watchable Wildlife Committee is comprised of the following agencies and organizations:

Golden Eagle Audubon
Idaho Department of Commerce & Labor
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation
Idaho Power
Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service